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NEWS RELEASE

Put a Freeze on Winter Fires

El Paso Fire Department Tips to Prevent Home Fires

EL PASO, Texas – With temperatures expected to significantly drop this winter, the El Paso Fire Department encourages the community to take special care when using heaters to warm up their homes.

According to the National Fire Protection Agency, heating is the second leading cause of U.S. home fires, deaths and injuries. In addition, December, January and February are the peak months for heating fires.

With a few simple safety tips and precautions, residents can prevent most heating fires from happening:

- Keep combustibles at least three feet away from heating equipment.
- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them into a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

For more information on heating fires, visit the El Paso Fire Department website and click on the "Holiday Safety" banner at www.elpasofire.gov

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